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Statement submitted by Universal Peace Federation, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2014/1/Rev.1, annex II.

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Statement

While the United Peace Federation supports many items in the prescribed focus areas, it encourages consideration of the family unit as a means of achieving the sustainable development goals. As we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, we are reminded that, as stated in the preamble to the Doha Declaration adopted by the International Conference for the Family (A/59/52, annex), the family is not only the fundamental group unit of society, but is also the fundamental agent for sustainable social, economic and cultural development. Research has shown that projects initiated at the family level are more successful and will achieve sustained results.

In the same way the family can help achieve the Millennium Development Goals, it can be of critical importance in achieving the sustainable development goals. There are numerous examples of families contributing to the accomplishment of the Millennium Development Goals. In the book entitled *The Family and the MDGs — Using Family Capital to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*, one author addressed focus area 1, stating that development was empowerment and about local people taking control of their own lives, expressing their own concerns and finding their own solutions to their problems. The author considered that, as we empower families with additional resources and education to break through the poverty barrier, we lift generations to come, and that projects that identify the family as the entry point seem to have more success than those that target other social units.

There are numerous examples of community associations formed to help family farmers to improve their ability to buy seeds and other agriculture input and to market their produce as a group. Family-based cooperatives raise communities out of poverty, family by family.

Agricultural programmes that address the family as a unit have been observed to have a direct impact on gender equality; for example, family-focused farming increases men's involvement in agricultural productivity, bringing some relief to women who more commonly perform most of the work involved in growing vegetables. Furthermore, extension education for family farmers increases knowledge in relation to successful agriculture and teaches methods to overcome land degradation and soil depletion, thus protecting our environment.

As smallholder farmers become more successful, the food supply increases at the local level, where it is needed most, and the goals of focus area 2 can be accomplished. If developing nations could increase productivity and profitability of the family farms of the world, basic nutrition and food supply would increase. Access to education would increase, as parents have the funds to send their boys and girls to school. Health care would be expanded as the family has the funds for health-care needs.

There are many other examples of how focusing on the family unit leads to effective implementation in regard to the key focus areas. The family has great capacities to encourage and promote education, empowerment of women, essential social skills, job skills and literacy. All are necessary conditions for a realistic and successful sustainable development agenda. Thus, the family is a driver of sustainability and must be included in the implementation of the sustainable development goals.